Fighting fair

The Rev. Mel White and Dr. James Dobson never did meet man to man last week.

But the public got an earful as both engaged in very public debate over Focus on the Family's position on homosexuals.

White, a minister at the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, kicked off a fast in front of Focus July 11, and distributed a press packet he said was the result of close monitoring of "anti-gay rhetoric" in broadcasted and print/media materials that lead to direct discrimination of and violence toward homosexuals.

Dobson was in England writing a book, but last Wednesday White and other gay and lesbian representatives met with three Focus vice presidents. Shortly after that, Focus issued a five-page "public policy" statement that charged the reverend with spreading disinformation.

In a personal letter to White also distributed to the media, Dobson conceded he is opposed to the "homosexual and lesbian agenda," but accused White of distortion and misrepresentation.

Dobson questioned White's motives, and said the reverend had "been attacking (him) unjustly for almost a year."

"I just ask that you fight fair," Dobson wrote. "When you make an accusation of me, please be man enough to document it with quotations and circumstances."

On Sunday, Dobson reprinted the long letter in a full-page advertisement in the *Gazette Telegraph*.

White responded with a three-page letter of his own to Dobson, also distributed to the media. White tells Dobson he believes the Focus leader is sincere, but points to a March 1993 newsletter where the words homosexual, lesbian, gay or homosexuality are used 22 times to illustrate an "alarming erosion of morality in the culture."

"I stand by my charge that the anti-gay rhetoric...lead directly to discrimination, suffering and death for gay and lesbian people," White wrote.

His supporters plan to take out a similar full-page ad in the *Denver Post* to print the full text of White's letter to Dobson.

An estimated $2,000 was raised to pay for the ad during last Sunday's gay and lesbian Pridefest and Rally.

— Cara DeGette

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to *Your Turn*. Please limit your opinions to 650 words or less, and include your name address and telephone verification. Send your submissions to: Editor, *The Colorado Springs Independent*, 121 E. Pikes Peak Ave., Suite 455, Colorado Springs, 80903.

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